Tom Thumbe,

His Life and Death:

BIBLIOTECA · BODLEIANA
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Wherein is declared many Maruailous Acts of Manhood, full of wonder, and strange merriments:

Which little Knight liued in King *Arthurs* time, and famous in the Court of *Great-Brittaine*.

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The Life and Death of *Tom Thumbe.*

Of the Birth, Name, and bring'ng vp of *Tom Thumbe*, with the meery prankes that hee did in his Childehood.

IN Arthurs Court Tom Thumbe did liue,
a man of mickle might,
The best of all the Table round,
and eke a doughty Knight:
His stature but an inch in height,
or quarter of a span,
Then thinke you not this little Knight,
was prou'd a valiant man?

His Father was a Plow-man plaine
his Mother milkt the Cow,
But yet the way to get a sonne
these couple knew not how,
Vntill such time this good old man
to learned Merlin goes,
And there to him his deepe desires
in secret manner showes

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How in his heart he wisht to haue
a Childe in time to come,
To be his Heire, though it might be
no bigger then his Thumbe:
Of which old Merlin thus foretold,
that he his wish should haue,
And so this Sonne of stature small
the Charmer to him gaue.

No blood nor bones in him should be,
in shape, and being such,
That men should heare him speake, but not
his wandring shadow touch:
But so vnseene to goe or come
whereas it pleasd him still,
Begot and borne in halfe an houre,
to fit his Fathers will:

And in foure minutes grew so fast,
that he became so tall
As was the Plowmans thumbe in height,
and so they did him call,
Tom Thumbe, the which the Fayry-Queene,
there gaue to him his name,
Who with her traine of Goblins grim,
vnto his Christning came.

Whereas

Tom Thumbe.

Whereas he cloath'd him richly braue,
in garments fine and faire,
Which lasted him for many yeares,
in seemely sort to weare:
His hat made of an Oaken leafe,
his shirt a spiders web,
Both light and soft, for those his limbes
that were so smally bred.

His hose and doublet Thistle downe,
togeather weau'd full fine,
His stockins of an apple greene,
made of the outward rine;
His garters were two little haires,
pull'd from his mothers eye,
His bootes and shoes a mouses skin,
there tand most curiously.

Thus like a lustie gallant, he
aduentured forth to goe,
With other Children in the streets
his pretty trickes to show,
Where he for counters, pinns, and points,
and cherry stones did play,
Till he amongst those gamesters young
had lost his stocke away:

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Yet could he ſone renue the ſame,
when as moſt nimbly he
Would diue into the Cherry-baggs,
and there a taker be,
Unſæne or felt by any one,
vntill a Scholler ſhut
This nimble youth into a bore,
wherein his pins he put,

Of whom to be reueng'd, he take
(in mirth and pleaſant game)
Black pots, and glaſſes, which he hung
vpon a bright Sunne-beame:
The other Boyes to doe the like,
in pieces broke them quite,
For which they were moſt ſoundly whipt,
whereat he laught outright.

And ſo Tom Thumbe reſtrained was
from theſe his ſports and play.
And by his Mother after that
compel'd at home to ſtay:
Whereas about a Chriſtmas time,
his father a Hog had kil'd,
And Tom to ſée the puddings made,
fear'd that they ſhould be ſpil'd.

Tom Thumbe.

How *Tom Thumbe* fell into the Pudding-Boule: and of his escape out of the Tinkers Budget.

HE sate vpon the Pudding-boule,
the Candle for to hold:

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Tom Thumbe.

Of which there is vnto this day,
a prétty pastime told:
For Tom fell in and could not be
that euer after found,
For in the blood and batter he
was strangely lost and drownd.

Where searching long but all in baine,
his Mother after that,
Into a Pudding thrust her Soune,
in stead of minced fat:
Which pudding of the largest size
into the Kettle thrownе,
Made all the rest to fly thereout,
as with a whirle-wind blownе.

For so it tumbled vp and downe,
within the liquor there,
As if the Deuill had there bén boyld,
such was his Mothers feare,
That vp she toke the pudding strait,
and gaue it at her doore,
Unto a Tinker, which from thence
in his blacke Budget bore

But as the Tinker climb'd a stile,
by chance he let a cracke:

Tom Thumbe.

Now gip old knaue, out cride Tom Thumbe,
there hanging at his backe:
At which the Tinker gan to run,
and would no longer stay,
But cast both bag and Pudding downe,
and thence hyed fast away.

From which Tom Thumbe got loose at last,
– and home return'd againe,
Where he from following dangers long
in safety did remaine:
Untill such time his mother went
a milking of her Kine,
Where Tom vnto a Thistle fast
she linked with a twine.

How *Tom Thumbe* was tyed to a Thistle, and how his Mothers Cow eate him vp: with his strange deliverance out of the Cowes belly.

A Thread that helde him to the same,
for feare the blustring winde
Should blow him thence, that so she might,
her Sonne in safety finde:
But marke the hap. a Cow came by,
and vp that Thistle eate.

Tom Thumbe.

Pwze Tom withall (that as a docke)
was made the red Cowes meate:

Who being mist, his Mother went
him calling euery where,
Where art thou Tom, where art thou Tom,
quoth he, Here Mother, here;
Within the red Cowes belly here:
your Soune is swallowed vp,
The which into her fearefull heart,
most carefull dolours put.

Meane while the Cow was troubled much,
in this her tumbling wombe,
And could not rest vntill that she
had backward cast Tom Thumbe:
Who all besmeared as he was,
his mother toke him vp,
To beare him thence, the which pwze Lad,
she in her pocket put.

Now after this, in sowing time,
his Father would him haue
Into the field to driue his plow,
and thereupon him gaue
A whip made of a Barly straw,

to

Tom Thũmbe.

to driue the Cattle on:
Where in a furrow'd land new sowne,
poore Tom was lost and gon.

How *Tom Thumbe* was carried away by a Raven; and how he was swallowed by a Giant, with other strange accidents that befell him.

Tom Thumbe.

NOw by a Raven of great strength
away he thence was borne,
And carried in the carrions beake,
euen like a graine of Corne,
Vnto a Giants Castle top,
in which he let him fall,
Where sone the Giant swallowed vp,
his body, cloathes and all.

But in his belly did Tom Thumbe
so great a rumbling make,
That neither day nor night he could
the smallest quiet take,
Vntill the Gyant had him spewd
three miles into the Sea,
Whereas a Fish sone tooke him vp
and bore him thence away.

Which lusty Fish was afeer caught,
and to King Arthur sent,
Where Tom was found, and made his Dwarfe,
whereas his dayes he spent,
Long time in liuely iollity,
belou'd of all the Court,
And none like Tom was then esteem'd
amongst the noble sort.

Amongst

Tom Thumbe.

Amongſt his déedes of Courtſhipdome,
his highneſſe did command,
That he ſhould dance a Galliard braue,
vpon his Quéenes left hand.
The which he did and for the ſame.
the King his ſignet gaue,
Which Tom about his middle wore,
long time a girdle braue.

Now

Now after this the King would not
abroad for pleasure goe,
But still Tom Thumbe must ride with him,
plac't on his saddle bow:
When on a time when as it rain'd,
Tom Thumbe most nimbly crept
In at a Button hole, where he
within his bosome slept.

And being neere his Highnesse heart,
He crau'd a wealthy boone,

A liberall gift, the which the King
commanded to be done,
For to relieue his Fathers wants,
and Mothers, being old:
Which was so much of siluer Coyne,
as well his armes could hold.

And so away goes lusty Tom,
with three pence on his backe,
A heany burthen, which might make
his wearied limbes to cracke,
So trauelling two dayes and nights,
with labour and great paine,
He came into the house whereas
his parents did remaine,

Which was but halfe a mile in space,
from good Kings Arthurs Court,
The which in eight and forty houres,
he went in weary sort:
But comming to his Fathers doore,
he there such entrance had,
As made his Parents both reioice,
and he thereat was glad.

His Mother in her apron tooke
her gentle Sonne in haste,

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And by the fier side, within
a walnut shell him plac'd:
Whereas they feasted him three dayes
upon a Hazell nut,
Whereon he rioted so long,
he them to charges put.

And there-upon grew wonderous sicke,
through eating too much meate,
Which was sufficient for a month
for this great man to eate.
But now his businesse call'd him forth,
king Arthurs Court to see,
Whereas no longer from the same
he could a stranger be.

But yet a few small April drops,
which setled in the way,
His long and weary journey forth,
did hinderand so stay,
Until his carefull Father tooke
a birding trunke in sport,
And with one blast blew this his Sonne
into King Arthurs Court.

Of *Tom Thumbs* running at Tilt, with diuers other Knightly exercises by him performed.

NOw he with Tilts and Turnaments
was entertained so,

Tom Thumbe.

That all the best of Arthurs Knights,
did him much pleasure show,
As good Sir Lancelot of the Lake,
sir Tristram, and sir Guy,
Yet none compar'd with brave Tom Thum,
for Knightly Chivalry.

In honour of which noble day,
and for his Ladies sake,
A challenge in King Arthurs Court,
Tom Thumbe did bravely make:
Gainst whom these noble Knights did run,
sir Chinon, and the rest,
Yet still Tom Thumbe with matchles might
did beare away the best.

At last sir Lancelot of the Lake,
in manly sort came in,
And with this stout and hardy Knight
a battle did begin.
Which made the Courtiers all agast,
for there that valiant man,
Through Lancelots Steed before them all,
in nimble manner ran.

Yea horse and all, with speare and shield,
as hardly he was lane,

But onely by King Arthurs selfe
and his admired Queene,
Who from her finger toke a Ring,
though which Tom Thumbe made way,
Not touching it in nimble sort,
as it was done in play.

He likewise cleft the smallest haire
from his faire Ladies head,
Not hurting her, whose euen hand
him lasting honors bred:
Such were his deeds and noble acts,
in Arthurs Court there showne,
As like in all the world beside,
was hardly seene or knowne.

How *Tom Thumbe* did take his sickneſſe, and of his Death and Buriall.

NOw at these sports he toyld himselfe,
that he a sickenesse take,
Though which all manly exercise,
he carelesly forsake:
Where lying on his bed sore sicke,
King Arthurs Doctor came,
With cunning skill, by physicks art,
to ease and cure the same.

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His body being so slender small
this cyaning Doctor tooke
A fine Prospective glasse, with which
he did in secret looke
Into his sickened body downe,
and therein saw that death
Stood ready in his wasted guts,
to seale his vitall breath,

His

His armes and leggs consum'd as small,
as was a Spiders web,
Though which his dying houre grew on,
for all his limbes grew dead:
His face no bigger then an Ants
which hardly could be seene,
The losse of which renowned Knight
much griev'd the King and Queene.

And so with peace and quietnesse,
he left this earth below:
And up into the Fayry Land,
his Ghost did fading goe,
Whereas the Fayry Queene receiv'd,
with beauy mourning cheere.
The body of this valiant Knight,
whom she estéem'd so deare.

For with her dancing Nimphes in greene,
she fetcht him from his bed,
With musicke and sweet melody,
so soone as life was fled:
For whom King Arthur and his Knights,
for forty daies did mourne,
And in remembrance of his name
that was so strangely borne.

Tom Thumbe.

Ye built a Tombe of Marble gray,
and yeare by yeare did come
To celebrate that mournefull day,
and buriall of Tom Thum:
Whose fame still liues in England here,
amongst the Countrey sort.
Of whom our Wiues and Children small
tell tales of pleasant sport.

FINIS

Tom Thumbes Father.

BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE

Tom Thumbes Mother.